

How God speaks to us through
Events.

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1 Kings 21
HOW GOD SPEAKS THRU EVENTS.

INTRO. Interpretation of events by Bible writers.

Cromwells words to Gen. Assembly of Scotland
Chiding them for referring to certain late
happenings as "events" when he sees in them
"the hand of God in mighty and strange appear-
ances of his".

All the doings and misdoings of men
are meaningless to the Bible writers until
they have been related to God, whose purpose
in life is the real reason for our being ~~here~~
here and the sole explanation of the things
that happen.

GOD SPEAKS THRU HISTORY

The kingship of Ahab a splendid example.

His father, Omri (king of N. Israel 885-874)
Established a strong centralized Gov't
Effectively resisted Assyria
Resubjugated the Moabites (Moabite stone)
His name became known abroad as a great king

Ahab also a strong and able ruler (874-852)
His marriage to Phoenician princess, Jezebel
Brought trade and prosperity
His daughter's marriage to Jehoram of Judah
Israel and Judah united by close bonds
He threw off the yoke of Damascus
He gave the Assyrians and allies a crushing
defeat
Also mentioned in Moabite stone and in As-
syrian records.

But the Bible record barely mentions these achieve-
ments and is primarily interested in the fact that Ahab
was an apostate from the Jehovah religion, leading many
of his subjects into unrighteous, God-forgetting ways.

I. The first big thot in our lesson today is that God's
thots and ways are not our thots and ways.

1. History proclaims Ahab a successful king, the Bible
declares him to be a man disobedient to God's stan-
dards of morality and justice.

a- the incident of Naboth's vineyard.

Wanted-a garden for his palace

How Ahab acted upon Naboth's refusal to sell

2.

I.1.a The story shows clearly how the kings of Israel were limited, the people also having certain rights which the king could not transgress.

2. But by marrying Jezebel Ahab introduced into his own life and kingdom another theory of kingship, the irresponsible and dictatorial sort which conceives of the people as only a means to satisfy the ~~the~~ ~~own~~ selfish desires and whims of their monarchs.

"Dost thou not govern the kingdom of Israel? I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth"

To Jezebel it was but a trifling incident, but to the Bible writer who believes in a righteous God who governs kings as well as subjects this event marked the downfall of Ahab. The blood of Naboth cried from the ground for justice. God's ways are not man's ways. Elijah alone dared to stand up for the rights of the common people.

Recall the story of Joseph, bear in mind that Jesus always sided in with the common people and defended all little and weak ones. Listen to the Apostle Paul, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty."

3. The present trend of world history, especially of European history, with its trust in dictators and great men is a plain contradiction of this Bible teaching, and by means of such teaching anyone can confidently predict the ultimate downfall of such governing the common people.

Before we can establish the K. of G. on earth we all have to learn the humility which grasps the moral implication of the fact that God's thots are not our thots and His ways are not our ways. We must alter ours to bring them into accord with His. achieving

What the scientists are ~~doing~~ in their respective lines by conforming to the laws of nature, likewise in the the realm of the social, political and economic orders we must conform to the laws of God's justice and morality if civilization is to realize its destined end.

II. The second big thing in this story is the rapid descent into evil which accompanies any paltering with the truth as we have learned it.

1. Ahab at first disinclined to take any action, but he had, for commercial purposes and worldly ends domesticated a driving force of quite a different caliber and of greater strength than his own.

We have today good honorable men who wedded to their party machine do things against the best interest of their constituency that they would not dare do in private life.

2. The rapidity of the descent of the royal pair into immoral, unrighteous procedure

Forgery (use of name and seals of king)

Corruption of subjects by false witness

Murder in the name of the law

Prompt seizure of coveted property, foully won.

All these steps follow the initial departure from common decency.

3. The big point here is the Bible's grasp of the wholeness of the moral life. If we offend in one point of the moral law we are liable to offend in all.

To be perfect is God's standard for us, and the it seems impossible to attain it, striving for it is what safeguards the degree of morality we have attained.

III. The third big Bible point to stress is that the last word regarding the lives of individuals as well as of nations and civilizations is with God.

Ahab no doubt was glad he possessed the vineyard.

Evil men gloat over their achievements.

But the sudden-appearing, lean-faced, rough-dressed prophet Elijah as with the voice of God denounced Ahab's successful crime as the height of folly and as indicative of a certain doom.

This is not the way historians write of the doom of kings and kingdoms, but the Bible makes for the inner truth of things. Righteousness alone exalteth a nation. Justice and mercy to the lowly and poor strengthen the pillars of government be it a monarchy or democracy.

Disregard of the poor and needy and helpless has been, in every civilization and empire, from the Roman to the Russian, the harbinger of revolution and disaster. (Amos
This truth of God the prophets saw the most clearly.